1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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macerated and placed in the pool. Some of the writer's informants claim that a poison grass is used similarly.

A fish is cut in halves the long way and cooked immediately because it is believed that if a bit old when eaten it causes leprosy (but see Magic, page 207).

Oysters, periwinkles, and the many varieties of bivalves gathered by the women are cooked on the shore at the spot where they are collected. A fire is made over stones and the shellfish put on the hot stones and embers. The shells open or crack and the flesh is removed and eaten by the women or placed in small receptacles to be carried home to the men.

Honey is gathered by both sexes, but usually by men. When a hive is discovered in a hollow tree that is not too large the tree is cut down and the trunk split open. The honey is usually eaten where found. [136] Gathering honey is a painless task in Australia because the native bees are stingless. The honey is often put in a water-tight basket, mixed with water and drunk as a beverage. It is never allowed to ferment; the natives have no intoxicating drink. The wax is formed into a ball and put in the men's baskets to be used in the construction of various implements.

Pandanus fruit, ripening about August, is cut up into fine pieces and cooked. The small cabbage palm is gathered about the same time, the whole trunk of the plant being cooked and beaten on a log, and the glutinous product eaten. Spear grass is chewed by the children as well as the other people.

Cycad palm nuts are gathered from the center of the trees by the women with the aid of a forked stick placed against the trunk to make a rough ladder. The nuts are knocked off with a club if they are too high to reach. The outside skin is removed and the kernels are placed in a large basket which is submerged in a fresh-water pool and allowed to remain several days until the poisonous qualities of the green fruit are removed. Sometimes the women first heat the nuts, thus reducing the time for soaking them.

Several varieties of tree grubs are eaten. Both men and women gather them. They select trees which have the proper indications upon them, split open the trunk, and remove the grubs which are washed and eaten raw. They look much like the entrail of a fowl and taste much like a snail.

The nests of all the larger birds are robbed and the eggs eaten. During the proper season the various sea birds lay their eggs in great

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population occupied a site for the entire year. No Malay women were allowed to accompany the men on their southern voyages. With the exception of the tamarind tree and possibly the bamboo, no flora of the East Indies were deliberately transplanted to the northern coast of Australia. The Malays did not engage in any form of agriculture here. Although they brought rice for trade with the aborigines, none was ever planted by them or the natives. It may be possible that two cocoanut palm trees reported by the natives of the Kolpa clan of Cape Wessel Island were planted by the western trader, but it is also possible that the two trees sprouted from cocoanuts carried in by the tides, which bring hundreds of these nuts to the shores of northern Arnhem Land.[9]

The Malay traders made these long trips from their native islands to Australia because they wanted to acquire the native pearl shell, pearls, tortoise shell, trepang, and sandal wood, found all along the shores of North Australia. The natives received in return dugout canoes, rice, molasses, tobacco, cloth for sarongs, belts, knives, tomahawks, gin, and pipes, as well as other articles of trade. The Malay did not come to establish outposts of his civilization and promote agriculture, nor had he any desire to proselytize the aborigines to worship his gods; he came to trade for highly valued articles on which the natives placed little value, and when he had accomplished his purpose he was glad to go home to Macassar, Koepang, or Timor Laut. Consequently he had little effect on the native civilization or its racial stock.

The various head men of the coastal clans were made "kings" by Malay traders. Usually the brother of the "king" was also made a "king" to assist his older brother—apparently a Malay adaptation of native custom, since the ceremonial leader of a clan usually has his younger brother to assist him. The head men were put in charge of their clansmen in the trepang expeditions. Friendships grew up between various Malays and aborigines to the extent that the black fathers took their young sons down to the Malay boats and pointed out the men who were to be their trading friends when they were grown up. This indicates a tendency to organize the trade on the basis of the patrilineal line, which again shows that the Malays did not attempt to change native civilization, but merely adapted themselves to the native social institutions.

The gin traded to the natives caused occasional great drunken orgies, and much blood was shed in interclan fights that came to a head under this alcoholic stimulation. However, the alcohol seems to have had no effect upon the general well-being of the people.

[9] The ocean currents are exceptionally rapid in the Arafura Sea and the distances of no great length from cocoanut-growing areas, which makes it highly possible that of the tens of thousands of nuts washed ashore through the years, two of them might have taken root. Recent researches have shown that cocoanuts can remain in sea water for a considerable period of time without losing their germinating power.

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
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175 trend towards sexual excess and a desire for increased contact
177 with Europeans.

Such is the general outline of the conditions that have some bearing on our main theme.

177 During the Malay-Macassan epoch the Aborigines seem to have
648 maintained a fairly well integrated pattern of culture, absorbing or discarding new ideas without seriously disturbing its basic
[439] structure. The early Indonesians were to the Aborigines just representatives of another clan or tribal group not greatly dissimilar to their own, and so they carried on trade with these visitors, just as they would with members of other clans who had desirable commodities to barter. It was a natural outcome of this that the Aborigines should extend their traditional codes of hospitality, making their womenfolk available to the Macassan traders.[23] When the strangers were thus provided with temporary or permanent wives, the social organisation of the groups and the personal opinions of their members were adjusted to suit both parties – and so a delicate problem was settled. Occasional arguments and fights did break out between them, but these were usually regarded as being comparable to inter-clan feuds or quarrels.

[273] Once the quantities of intoxicating drink began to enter the settlements, especially during the last phase of Macassan contact, relations began to deteriorate. There was irregular promiscuity, women were bartered in return for goods, and quarrelling and fights became more bitter and more frequent. Stories relating the sexual excess that took place during this period show how strongly this behaviour affected the psychological makeup of the Aborigines. Old women of north-eastern Arnhem Land like to talk about the days of Macassan contact, and they contrast the uneventful period of recent years with the time when drinking bouts resulted in sexual promiscuity, and food and clothing were easily obtainable. Even the time of plenty that accompanied the Air Force occupation was not the same, they say, as the old trading days and the glamour of the Indonesian visitors.

177 When the Japanese and European traders came to this coast,
648 the Aborigines at first resented their intrusion. "Why," they
439 asked, "do these strangers take the place of our old friends?"

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

159 We Wangurri clans-people are a bush people (pages 16-29, 42). We are very strong and very fierce and good fighters. All the coast people are afraid of us. Our country comes to the salt water at only one place on Arnhem Bay (map, page 40). It was here that we saw the Macassar. They brought [439] us presents of rice, syrup, calico, tomahawks, dugout canoes, knives, and gin. We gave them pearl shell, pearls, tortoise shell, sandalwood, and other woods they use for medicine. We helped them gather trepang (pages 456-458).

159 273 439 579 At these times, when the Macassar prahus took down their sails and masts and their men disembarked, our old men drank plenty, for it was then they got all the gin they wanted for the presents they gave the Macassar men. There would always be big fights. In the morning you could see blood everywhere and many people were killed. While the old men fought with the knives from around their belts and with tomahawks, clubs, and spears, we children used to sneak in and eat the food that they had left. We always waited our chance and rushed in and ran away again.

159 431 609 I can remember one day my father's giving me some tortoise shell and saying, "Mahkarella, you go and give this to that Macassar man and make friends with him so that when he comes again he will know you, and you will know him, and you will have a feeling of friendship for each other." I did. The Macassar man talked to me but I didn't understand him. I forget the rest.

159 574 Another thing I remember when I was very small: I went with my father through the Gwiyamil clan country to the Wulkara people for a corroboree. This is the path our ranga took in the stories we know about him, and those people are also Sand Fly people (pages 33-35), just as we Wangurri are.

159 857 Before we were circumcised we little boys played spear-fighting games, talked about sneaking up and killing a man, and we threw clay mud balls at each other. When it was hot in the rainy season we swam in the sea (pages 125-128).

Later we played being grown men and women with the little girls. We made little fires in the sand beaches. We went out just like our fathers and pretended to spear fish, and the little girls went into the bush and brought home bush food (vegetable food). We made little bark huts just like our fathers' and mothers'. The girls would come in and lie beside us as our wives and we were their husbands.

When we were little boys, others boys who were a little bit bigger joked us about the wives we were going to marry. This made me feel very ashamed. Little girls joked the same way. They also became ashamed. When we got bigger we weren't ashamed any more. We were glad.

159 867 I think I always knew it was wrong to "play with" a girl of the Yiritcha